



## **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Veterans Health Administration  
Washington DC 20420

April 20, 2001

### **CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-17**

**CARES: The right care, at the right place, at the right time**

#### **UPCOMING ACTIVITIES IN MAY**

The schedule for the pilot project has been revised as experience has been gained on the effort required to collect the necessary data and the scope of information needed to develop demand-based options. The project remains within a few months of its original schedule, and two key milestones in the pilot process are scheduled for the month of May.

Booz-Allen, the CARES contractor, has been analyzing the demand projections and assessing the market implications for veteran health care in VISN 12. From this analysis a range of service delivery options is being drafted. The next step is for the application of the absolute criteria by VISN and Headquarters Clinical Workgroups. Both of these steps are scheduled for May.

What's the difference between "absolute" and "discriminating" criteria?

Absolute criteria are benchmarks or standards that must be met for any option to be considered. It is a pass/fail standard. The three absolute criteria include analyses of health care needs and requirements, clinical programs, and safety and environment considerations. For example, options must provide for a full array of special disability care, a safe and healthy environment for patients, visitors and staff, and an appropriate mix of inpatient and outpatient care. If an option does not pass the absolute criteria it receives no further consideration.

Discriminating criteria, with associated sub-criteria, are weighted to reflect the relative importance of each criterion. The absolute and discriminating criteria provide a methodology to assess each CARES option against a standard set of measurable and objective criteria.

## **WHAT IS CARES?**

CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) is about providing veterans the right care, at the right place, at the right time. It is about providing appropriate access and service for those who currently use VA's health care system, and for those who will use it in the future. The program will assess veterans' health care needs across the country, identify delivery options to meet those needs in the future, and guide the realignment and allocation of capital assets to support the delivery of health care services. Through CARES, VA will optimize care delivery in terms of both quality and access.

## **WHO IS CONDUCTING CARES?**

To ensure objectivity in this analysis, VA has hired outside health care consultants. Two companies are involved in the study. Actuarial consultants are conducting a study of factors, such as demand for VA health care services, demographics, and other data, to project what services will be needed and where. Booz-Allen & Hamilton will be using this data, incorporating information from stakeholders, analyzing current operations during their visits to the facilities and develop options to meet the future needs of veterans. The consultant will be applying a standard set of pre-approved criteria to various options.

## **WHAT OPPORTUNITY IS THERE FOR PEOPLE AND GROUPS TO HAVE A SAY IN CARES?**

Input into the CARES process will continue to be collected from both internal and external stakeholders throughout the Phase I pilot. To date, we have received valuable information from our stakeholders during the facility visits that occurred during January. Additionally, we have received e-mails and letters from interested persons and groups about the CARES study. This input will be very valuable in developing the health care service delivery options. Prior to any decision by the Secretary on the option, a formal comment period will begin in June.

Input into the CARES process will be considered throughout the process.  
Send comments or questions via mail, or e-mail.

Mail: CARES Comments  
VISN 12 Office (10N12)  
P.O. Box 5000, Building 18  
Hines, IL 60141-5000

E-mail: [CARES.mailbox@med.va.gov](mailto:CARES.mailbox@med.va.gov)

All of the comments will be forwarded to the contractors for their use during the development of the options.

Comments will be forwarded to the contractor for use in the development of the options and later to the National CARES Project Team (NCPT) for their use in the evaluation of the options.

### **HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON CARES?**

There will continue to be regular bulletins about CARES with updated information. It is expected that these bulletins will be sent out weekly. The CARES web site will also be updated periodically. There are now two web sites that individuals may use. For VA employees and any others who have access to the VA Intranet, there is a link on the VISN 12 Home Page for CARES. In addition, VA's Internet web site has been established at the following address - [www.va.gov/CARES](http://www.va.gov/CARES)

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Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Comment Form  
VISN 12 CARES STUDY

Areas of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments (Please add additional pages if needed):

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While all comments are taken into consideration, comments cannot be  
acknowledged and answered individually.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail comments to: CARES Comments  
VISN 12 Office (10N12)  
P.O. Box 5000, Building 18  
Hines, IL 60141-5000

E-mail comments to: CARES.Mailbox@med.va.gov

Washington Website: <http://www.va.gov/CARES>